



General Assembly

Seventy-fourth session

First Committee

19th meeting

Wednesday, 30 October 2019, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chair: Mr. Llorentty Solíz (Bolivia (Plurinational State of))

In the absence of the Chair, Ms. Mudallali (Lebanon), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 89 to 105 (continued)

Thematic discussions on specific subjects and introduction and consideration of draft resolutions and decisions submitted under all disarmament and related international security agenda items

The Acting Chair: In accordance with its programme of work, the Committee will first hear a briefing by Ms. Mary Soliman, Chief of the Regional Disarmament Branch of the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs. Thereafter the Committee will first resume its consideration of the cluster “Regional disarmament and security” to listen to the remaining speakers. Time permitting, the Committee will then begin its consideration of the cluster “Disarmament machinery”.

I now give the floor to Ms. Soliman.

Ms. Soliman (Chief, Regional Disarmament Branch, United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs): I am pleased to provide a brief overview of the work of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in Asia and the Pacific, and in Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA). A complete account of the Regional Centres’ activities since the convening of the Committee last year can be found in the reports of the Secretary-General (A/74/112,

A/74/115 and A/74/118), which are before the Committee for its consideration. I will also brief the Committee on the work undertaken by UNODA’s Vienna Office, especially in the area of education and outreach.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs, its three Regional Centres and the Vienna Office continue to be guided by the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Secretary-General’s *Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament*. The Regional Centres continue to work with Member States, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations to promote, facilitate and strengthen regional cooperation, dialogue and confidence-building.

In partnership with stakeholders, the Centres continue to provide capacity-building and training, as well as legal and technical assistance in support of efforts by Member States to implement regional and international treaties and other instruments. Furthermore, the Regional Centres support Member States in their efforts to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and especially their diversion to non-State armed groups; enhance the physical security and stockpile management of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition; undertake security-sector reform; support the implementation of Security Council resolutions; and promote the role of women in peace and security. In a nutshell, the activities of the Centres span the entire gamut of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control matters, ranging from conventional weapons to weapons of mass destruction and emerging issues. I would now like to

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

19-34057 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



say a few words about each Regional Centre, the Vienna Office and the strategic focus driving their activities in the coming year.

Since October of last year our Regional Centre in Lima, which covers 33 States in Latin America and the Caribbean, has carried out more than 60 disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control activities. The Centre's work during the period included training more than 140 front-line law-enforcement officials in four States to mitigate the diversion of weapons and ammunition using specialized X-ray technology. The Centre also engaged with more than 40 private security personnel, enhancing their capacity to apply the relevant international physical security standards in managing weapon-stockpile facilities. International best practices and standards, most notably the United Nations SaferGuard Programme International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, were incorporated into the Centre-led destruction in Peru of close to 1,000 pieces of light-weapon ammunition and 400 different types of missiles in Peru, with the aim of diminishing the risks of diversion and unintended explosions.

Additionally, with a view to boosting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Centre engaged with 60 youth community leaders from South America to conduct more than 5,000 surveys concerning engagement with SDG 16. The surveys were supported by a mobile application that was developed to facilitate data collection and analysis. The Centre worked with national arms-control and regulatory authorities in South America and the Caribbean to develop gender-sensitive approaches to the reduction of armed violence. In related work, it also collaborated with civil-society representatives on efforts to counter violence against women.

Turning to the Regional Centre in Kathmandu, as part of its support for 43 Member States in Asia and the Pacific, the Centre collaborated with Japan, Singapore and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Foundation to engage in disarmament and non-proliferation education, as well as regionally focused work on responsible innovation. As part of its revitalized peace and disarmament education programme, the Centre conducted baseline assessments in nine countries in line with the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education and action 38 of the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament. The findings of those assessments

provide the basis for further work to address the needs of the Asia and Pacific region, which will be a main focus for the Regional Centre in the coming year.

The Centre also provided substantive support to efforts bolstering the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), as well as to the national and regional event series of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on countering terrorism and financing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In addition, the Centre collaborated with the World Customs Organization's Asia/Pacific Security Conference on countering terrorism, at which it addressed issues related to the prevention of illicit trafficking in small arms and ammunition.

The Regional Centre in Lomé, for its part, continues to engage with the 54 Member States of the African continent in implementing their commitments under various disarmament, non-proliferation, arms-control and confidence-building instruments and treaties. The Regional Centre supports the work of States through activities related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security-sector reform. Notably, the Centre is implementing projects in support of the African Union's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and the Kinshasa Convention, as well as supporting a number of Governments in strengthening their physical security and stockpile management efforts to improve control over their arsenals and prevent the diversion of weapons to illicit markets. The Centre will continue to focus on those activities in the coming year in its work to combat violence exacerbated by the use of illicit small arms and light weapons in conflict zones. The Centre could also offer technical assistance in the prevention of violent extremism, cross-border cooperation, initiatives for community violence reduction and peace education with a focus on young people.

UNODA's Vienna Office, in addition to its main role as a liaison office with the relevant disarmament organizations in Vienna, also serves as UNODA's education hub. The Vienna Office hosts the Disarmament Education Dashboard, which is an online repository of courses on disarmament, non-proliferation and cross-cutting issues such as youth and gender. The Dashboard includes numerous introductory and advanced modules, developed by ODA and its partner organizations. Some courses are designed for the general public, while others are intended for disarmament professionals on specific topics. The Vienna Office is pleased to share those resources with interested Member States and

collaborate on specific training activities, delivered online or in person, capitalizing on its network of experts and relevant organizations. Learning modules are regularly updated, while new ones are being developed on relevant topics.

In order to better support Member States, the Regional Centres and the Vienna Office will continue to work closely with States in their respective regions to identify the strategic priorities and gaps where support is needed and, in collaboration with those States, to develop projects to effectively address current challenges. The focus in that regard will be on developing multidisciplinary, multi-partner projects to bolster national capacity. Additionally, my colleagues at the Regional Centres and the Vienna Office will continue to foster existing partnerships and cooperation with long-standing partners within the United Nations family, as well as regional organizations and stakeholders. They will also build new, collaborative relationships with non-traditional partners.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Member States and organizations that have made financial or in-kind contributions to the Regional Centres and the Vienna Office. I also would like to express our gratitude for their long-standing support to the Centres' host countries — Nepal, Peru and Togo — and of course to Austria, the home of UNODA's Liaison Office. As we all know, the three Regional Centres and the Vienna Office depend on extrabudgetary resources to fund their substantive programmes and activities. I therefore encourage and invite all Member States to support the Centres and the Vienna Office through voluntary contributions. Their financial and political support enables the stability and continuation of the operations and activities of the Centres and the Vienna Office.

The Acting Chair: I thank Ms. Soliman for her briefing.

In keeping with the established practice of the Committee, I will now suspend the meeting to afford delegations an opportunity to hold an interactive discussion with our panellists through an informal question-and-answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.15 p.m. and resumed at 3.20 p.m.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now resume its consideration of the cluster "Regional disarmament and security".

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): Regional approaches provide important avenues to further disarmament, security and non-proliferation objectives. For example, the decision of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to eliminate nuclear weapons and its commitment to preserving the region as a nuclear-weapon-free zone will be vital in addressing regional threats. By contrast, China's expanding nuclear arsenal, estimated to more than double in the next decade, includes efforts to develop new low-yield nuclear weapons and nuclear-armed hypersonic missiles, while at the same time refusing to engage in substantive dialogue on nuclear arms control. For the good of all of us, China must come to realize that the continued silence on its part is destabilizing.

Significant security challenges also persist in the Middle East. Chief among them are Iran's destabilizing activities, including its ballistic-missile programme, expansion of uranium-enrichment activities and support for terrorism. Then there is Syria's repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people, its utter disregard for its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and its ongoing non-compliance with its International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards Agreement and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We urge all the States of the region to refocus attention on addressing those important real-world security challenges.

The United States continues to support the goal of a Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems. We remain convinced, however, that efforts to advance that objective must be pursued by all the States of the region concerned in an inclusive, cooperative and consensus-based manner that takes into account the legitimate concerns of every State in the region. In that regard, we deeply regret the General Assembly's adoption last year in a divided vote of decision 73/546, sponsored by the Group of Arab States, calling on the Secretary-General to convene a conference to negotiate a legally binding treaty on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction. We regret that the decision was put forward without consensus support among the States of the region and based on terms that were well known to be unacceptable to other regional parties. We have been clear that, in the absence of the participation of all

States in the region, the United States will not attend such a conference and will regard any outcome of it as illegitimate.

In conclusion, none of us should be under the illusion that the long-term goal of the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons can be achieved without doing the hard work necessary to address those and other security challenges. We encourage all States to join us in reinvigorating that work by engaging in a realistic dialogue about our troubled world, the world as it is, and the steps we can take to reshape it into the world we would like it to be.

Mr. Liddle (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union (see A/C.1/74/PV.18), and I would like to add some remarks in our national capacity.

Regional stability, based on mutual understanding and respect between neighbours, is essential to global peace. Unfortunately, the behaviour of a number of actors continues to undermine regional security in various parts of the world, to the detriment of the global security situation.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important tool for regional security. Having ratified the protocols to the other existing zone treaties, we stand ready, with the rest of the five permanent members of the Security Council, to engage further with the States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the Protocol to the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

We continue to support the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free from weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, in accordance with arrangements freely arrived at by all States of the region and in full recognition of our responsibilities as a co-convenor under the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. The repeated use of chemical weapons in Syria and Iran's moves to reverse its compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action undermine that goal. Iran's development of ballistic missiles and its military and financial support to a range of actors violate Security Council resolutions and destabilize the Middle East and threaten the security of Europe.

The proliferation of ballistic missiles also continues to pose a danger in other parts of the world, such as the repeated ballistic missile launches by the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea in violation of Security Council resolutions. The United Kingdom supports the important work of the Missile Technology Control Regime and The Hague Code of Conduct in tackling ballistic-missile proliferation. We encourage India and Pakistan to consider the Code of Conduct as a means of supporting their bilateral engagement. Dialogue and transparency are crucial to reducing tensions and the risk of miscalculations.

Finally, in our own region, Russia continues to undermine the security situation, through actions such as its illegal annexation of Crimea, its continued aggression against Ukraine and its sustained non-compliance with international treaties. The new and destabilizing war-fighting capabilities it is developing are also dangerous, as we have seen over the past year. Russia has refused to engage constructively in dialogue and seeks to undermine the rules-based international system. We continue to call on Russia to demonstrate its compliance with arms control and to come into alignment with international norms.

The United Kingdom, along with its NATO allies, is firmly committed to the preservation of effective international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. We will continue to support and uphold the existing international disarmament and security frameworks, which play an important role in Euro-Atlantic security.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Nepal to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.23.

Mr. Bhandari (Nepal): I would like to begin by thanking Ms. Mary Soliman for her comprehensive briefing on the activities of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament.

Nepal believes that the regional and global approaches to disarmament and non-proliferation complement each other and should be pursued simultaneously in order to promote regional and international peace and security. As identified in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, we must foster new cooperation and dialogue, especially at the regional level, in order to reduce military spending and build the confidence of the States Members of the United Nations.

Nepal encourages the Regional Centres to develop a meaningful partnership with both Government and

non-Government stakeholders. The formal track of disarmament and non-proliferation should be complemented by Track II tools for building confidence between and among States. The Regional Centres should be encouraged to disseminate information and develop educational modules for various age groups to enhance their awareness level. The three United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament — in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean — should be further strengthened, well-resourced and developed, not only as repositories of best practices but also as amplifiers of regional disarmament efforts.

Since the late 1980s, Nepal, in partnership with the Regional Centre, has been organizing regional meetings and dialogue under the Kathmandu process. We reaffirm the importance of such regional dialogues for fostering understanding, cooperation and confidence-building for peace and disarmament in the region and beyond. As the host country to the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal will continue to extend its support to the Centre's capacity-building and implementation of programmes of action related to disarmament and non-proliferation. We encourage the Member States of the region to identify their areas of interest and to work with the Centre on promoting disarmament and non-proliferation in the region. Nepal calls on the countries and non-governmental organizations in the region and beyond to make voluntary contributions to the Centre to ensure that it can carry out its activities as mandated by the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that Nepal has submitted a draft resolution on the Regional Centres (A/C.1/74/L.23) for the consideration of the Committee. We are confident that, as in previous years, we will garner the valuable support of all delegations for the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): Indonesia associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/C.1/74/PV.18).

Because of its inclusivity, shared norms and rules-based nature, regionalism can bond countries with strong benefits, not the least of which are common peace and development. We are pleased that the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, through the active contribution of all of its participants, continues to make progress as an important multilateral platform for political security dialogue and cooperation and for promoting confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. Indonesia remains committed to working with other ASEAN countries on the efforts to ensure that the nuclear-weapon States sign and ratify the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty Protocol as soon as possible. I would like to underline several pertinent points.

First, we underscore the importance of cohesion among nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the long-overdue zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We call for the full and meaningful participation of all the countries of the region in the upcoming conference next month. We also support the convening of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, to be held next year. There are valuable lessons to be learned from the previous sessions, which Indonesia chaired, lessons that should be developed to ensure a successful and substantive outcome to the Conference.

Secondly, regarding the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, we stress the importance of constructive dialogue as the main component of a peace process. The involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as an independent and competent body in the verification process will certainly contribute to the peninsula's permanent denuclearization. Indonesia believes that all the parties concerned should work to enhance dialogue, build confidence and trust and implement the commitments they have made to maintaining peace and security.

Thirdly, commitments made between Iran and relevant parties to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, under Security Council resolution 2231 (2015), should be upheld. Again, the role of the IAEA in verifying it is key to the agreement's effectiveness. Only by implementing the commitments agreed on by all parties will this landmark achievement in the area of non-proliferation be able to contribute to the peace and stability of the region and the world.

Ensuring global peace and security is a collective undertaking to which all States should be fully committed. All countries and regions, with the United

Nations at the helm, have to play their role fittingly. Let us do that with full resolve.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.5, A/C.1/74/L.7 and A/C.1/75/L.8.

Mr. Ahmed (Pakistan): The General Assembly has long recognized that international peace and security, and stability at the regional and subregional levels, are mutually dependent. In view of that inextricable relationship, the Charter of the United Nations acknowledges the value of regional arrangements to ensure global peace and security. In the post-Cold War era, most threats to peace and security arise mainly among States located in the same region or subregion. International efforts to promote disarmament and arms control are therefore reinforced and complemented by regional approaches to that end.

As the relevant General Assembly resolutions and United Nations Disarmament Commission guidelines have affirmed, confidence-building measures at the regional level have to be tailored to the specifics of the region and should begin with simple arrangements on transparency, openness and risk reduction before the States concerned have no choice but to pursue more substantive arms-control and disarmament measures. Mutually agreed confidence-building measures can help to create favourable conditions. However, they should not become an end in themselves. Over the long term such measures should also contribute to conflict resolution, but if conflicts continue to fester, those measures may lose their efficacy over time.

South Asia faces certain distinct challenges arising from the hegemonic pretensions of one country of the region. As it continues to acquire destabilizing strategic and conventional capabilities, and to develop offensive military doctrines, that country has refused to engage in a bilateral dialogue on confidence-building and risk reduction. More than ever before, the situation forces us to recognize the clear and present danger posed by such developments not just to Pakistan, but also to regional and international peace and security. Pakistan desires peace. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without resolving the underlying disputes, agreeing on reciprocal measures for strategic restraint and instituting a balance between conventional forces. Our proposals in that regard remain on the table. Pakistan is open to any bilateral or regional initiative that builds confidence, reduces risk and conforms to the

cardinal principle of equal and undiminished security for all.

As in previous years, my delegation has submitted three draft resolutions, A/C.1/74/L.5, A/C.1/74/L.7 and A/C.1/74/L.8, which recognize the significance of regional approaches to arms control, disarmament and confidence-building for international peace and stability, as well as the complementarity between regional and global approaches. We look forward to the continued support of Member States for the adoption of this year's draft resolutions. The full version of my statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Ms. Al Mazroui (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): Due to our time constraints, I will focus on the most important points of my statement, the full version of which will be available on PaperSmart.

The United Arab Emirates aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.18).

The Middle East continues to face security threats and attacks by terrorist and extremist groups, and is therefore one of the regions most urgently in need of intensified efforts in the areas of disarmament and security stability. My country therefore considers all efforts to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East to be vital. The United Arab Emirates supports the United Nations initiative convening the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be held in November and presided over by Jordan, and urges all the invited parties to participate in the negotiations on concluding a binding treaty in that regard with a view to ensuring regional and international peace and security.

In that connection, the United Arab Emirates stresses the importance of achieving a successful outcome at the forthcoming Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and for taking serious measures to implement the 2010 Review Conference Action Plan. We also need to comprehensively address the three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). My country looks forward to participating in the 2020 Review Conference in order to strengthen the international peace and security system,

and we urge States parties to the Treaty to participate in a constructive dialogue with the aim of achieving the Treaty's objectives.

The United Arab Emirates welcomed the recent positive steps taken at the high-level talks on the Korean peninsula. In that connection, we renew our call to North Korea to return to the NPT, sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and abide by the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The United Arab Emirates renews its commitment to the NPT, while asserting the right of States to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy. My country is a model in the region for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Since we joined the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), in 1976, we have cooperated with the Agency on our national development needs. We also base our cooperation on the objectives of the United Arab Emirates Vision 2021, which seeks to ensure that our country is among the best in dealing with various issues such as social and economic development. We therefore call on all countries to abide by the standards of the IAEA and continue to build confidence with regard to their nuclear activities, in the hope that such measures will have a positive effect on the behaviour of the countries in the region.

Mr. Karbou (Togo) (*spoke in French*): The importance of the Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament (UNLIREC) needs no advertisement. Indeed, we have long known that there is a vast and largely unexplored potential for progress in the field of disarmament through action at the regional level. Many actions carried out by the Regional Centre in Africa on the ground attest to that reality, as is also the case in other regions, particularly Latin America and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific. In that regard, Togo welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General on the regional disarmament centres (A/74/112, A/74/115 and A/74/118), and more specifically on the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which Togo has the honour and privilege to host.

It is always useful to recall the important role played by the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly in the African context, where our States face enormous security challenges, which unfortunately have increased tenfold owing to asymmetric conflicts in our countries, in which various individuals illegally acquire conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons.

In accordance with its mandate, UNLIREC in Africa has carried out significant actions in the context of regional disarmament. Last year, as usual, at the request of African States, it provided technical support for their initiatives to implement essential peace and arms-control measures. The Centre also assisted in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the Biological Weapons Convention. I should note that the Regional Centre's contribution remains valuable to the implementation of the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel through the provision of technical assistance aimed at more effectively combating the illicit circulation of small arms.

The challenges facing the Regional Centres remain largely financial. That is why Togo echoes the Secretary-General's call for greater efforts by Member States and contributors to strengthen their operational capacities to meet our countries' ever-growing needs. As host country of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, Togo continues to work tirelessly to provide the Centre with the best possible working conditions. In that connection, the Centre is now housed in a brand-new building, built by the Government of Togo and inaugurated on 5 July 2018 by Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Ms. Agladze (Georgia): Militarization is a major concern and threat not only to my country but to the security of the entire Black Sea region. The Russian Federation's trend towards increased militarization in Georgia has not been reversed. On the contrary, it has persisted and even accelerated its pace and scope in some respects. The Committee is well aware that the two occupied regions of Georgia have been heavily militarized for more than 10 years now. The illegal Russian military bases stationed in the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions are under the command of the Russian Federation's Southern Military District and actively participate in Russian military drills, including large-scale exercises. Both bases are well armed and equipped with advanced and offensive military equipment, including tanks, armoured vehicles, long-range artillery, rocket-launching systems, anti-aircraft systems, electronic warfare and signals intelligence capabilities and unmanned aerial vehicles, all with a wide-range coverage throughout the Caucasus and the Black Sea. In addition to that, 4,500 military and 1,300 Federal Security Service personnel are illegally stationed in both regions.

All of that is happening in violation of the Russian Federation's commitments under the ceasefire agreement of 12 August 2008, which called clearly for the withdrawal of Russian forces to their lines of deployment prior to 7 August 2008 and required that international monitors be granted access to the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions. Instead, the opposite has happened, with the Russian Federation continuing its military build-up and its so-called border guards consistently denying access to the European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia so that it can fully exercise its mandate and enter the regions for monitoring and verification purposes. Ironically, only a few days ago the occupying regime even briefly detained one of the Monitoring Mission's patrols in the Chorchana-Tsnelisi area, where the so-called borderization process is in full swing.

In conclusion, I want to point out that this situation does not reflect a trend confined only to Georgia. Since 2014 we have been witnessing clear violations of Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation, including the closure of major parts of the Black Sea, with serious implications for the security of the entire region.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Algeria to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.9.

Mr. Khaldi (Algeria): In view of the paramount significance of regional disarmament, my delegation would like to make the following remarks.

Algeria remains deeply involved in consolidating stability and security beyond its borders and working closely with neighbouring countries for a better future for all the peoples of the region. In that regard, we continue to believe firmly that the only way to settle the crisis in Libya is through a political solution involving a comprehensive dialogue and national reconciliation for all Libyans. We urge the international community to make every possible political and diplomatic effort to support and promote a national and inclusive solution for Libya.

As far as the situation in Mali is concerned, the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali, resulting from the Algiers process, remains the sole frame of reference for the Government, other Malian parties and the international community. My country is strongly committed to ensuring the due implementation

of the Agreement and has therefore continued to play a key role in chairing the Follow-up Committee.

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, known as the Pelindaba Treaty, establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, is a concrete example of disarmament at the regional level. Algeria was among the first African States to ratify that landmark instrument, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary this year. We therefore call on States that have yet to do so to sign and ratify the three Protocols annexed to the Treaty. In the same context, my delegation welcomed the General Assembly's adoption, in December 2018, of decision 73/546, on convening a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We express the hope that the conference, which will hold its first session next month, will bring a legally binding treaty on the establishment of such a zone to a conclusion in good faith. We therefore call on all the States of the region, without exception, to participate actively in the conference.

The Algerian delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report (A/74/97) on the strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region, which contains some Member States' perspectives on ways and means to strengthen security and cooperation in the region. As in previous years, Algeria has the honour to introduce to the First Committee and the General Assembly at its current session draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.9, entitled "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", under agenda item 103. The Algerian delegation and the other sponsoring Member States count on the support of all States Members for the adoption of the draft text.

Finally, Algeria associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia, Tunisia and Zambia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of Arab States and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/C.1/74/PV.18). The full version of my statement will be made available on PaperSmart.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the representative of Peru to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.42.

Mr. Prieto Tica (Peru) (spoke in Spanish): Latin America and the Caribbean is primarily a middle-income region and has made significant progress in reducing poverty, violence and insecurity. Accomplishing that

requires coordinating efforts to carry out activities to implement measures aimed at promoting peace, mutual trust and disarmament, in conjunction with others fostering economic and social development. To that end, the General Assembly tasked the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean with considering ways of meaningfully supporting the initiatives and activities of the States of the region aimed at the implementation of peace and disarmament measures, as well as the promotion of economic and social development.

Thanks to the Centre's support, the States of Latin America and the Caribbean have been able to move forward in developing capacities, training specialized personnel and developing and implementing standards in areas related to disarmament and security. In that context, this year the Centre organized 70 technical, legal and policy assistance activities to assist the States of the region in implementing instruments related to conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Those efforts included the provision of technical training for more than 1,000 national officials on the destruction of ammunition, the marking and tracing of small arms and ammunition, the interception of weapons at entry and exit points, crime-scene investigation procedures, the physical security and management of stockpiles and the transfer of conventional weapons. The Centre has also aligned its activities with the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal 16, by establishing contacts with approximately 60 young people to gauge the levels of violence and insecurity in their respective communities. Lastly, the Centre has continued to promote the participation of women in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms-control initiatives in line with General Assembly resolution 65/69.

With regard to Peru and its goal of reducing the harmful effects created by the threat of the illicit proliferation and indiscriminate use of conventional weapons of war, the Centre has collaborated with the Peruvian army in the destruction of ammunition in the central part of the country. And in order to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the Centre has helped Peru draft new laws in consonance with the Biological Weapons Convention.

Lastly, in view of these considerations, my delegation will once again submit draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.52, on the work of the Regional Centre,

which we hope will enjoy the valuable support of all delegations and be adopted by consensus, as in previous years.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The military and political situation in the world continues to deteriorate. We are particularly concerned about what is happening on that front in Europe. NATO's official anti-Russian direction is eroding the very foundation on which European regimes and security instruments were built and have functioned. For example, thousands of NATO troops have showed up on a so-called continuous rotational basis close to Russia's borders, where they have never appeared before. Formerly militarily stable regions in Northern Europe and the Baltic are increasingly resembling front-line zones. NATO's military activity in the Black Sea is increasing. Growing numbers of combined contingents are being deployed to project a show of force.

In this situation we believe it is essential to take advantage of every opportunity to reduce tensions and encourage cooperation. In view of the fact that the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe has become obsolete, confidence- and security-building measures have not only retained their significance but have become crucial. We are conscious of the particular significance for European security of the implementation of the Vienna Document 2011. We want to emphasize that we do not consider the idea of modernizing the Vienna Document a positive one. In the context of NATO's policy of confrontation and containment where Russia is concerned, even a technical reissuance makes no sense. The decisions of the Forum for Security Cooperation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) taken over the past five years have been implemented as soon as they have been released.

We welcome the resumption of the full-scale implementation of the Open Skies Treaty this year. A continuation of the no-fly period could lead to an increase in mutual distrust and military and political tensions. We hope that Georgia will implement the Treaty in good faith.

We consider the OSCE Structured Dialogue on security challenges in Europe an important confidence-building measure aimed at de-escalating military tensions and reducing threats. Proposals were made demanding an additional analysis, particularly regarding the ideas about formulating a code of conduct

on transparency, risk reduction and the prevention and resolution of military incidents. We will continue our participation in that format. We support the OSCE's role in helping to resolve conflicts. For our part, we will continue to facilitate their settlement in Donbas, Transnistria and Nagorno Karabakh. I would like to emphasize that Russia is not a party to any conflicts in the OSCE area or the world as a whole.

In general, we are compelled to conclude that, in the light of the current lack of trust, we should not expect substantive progress on conventional arms control in Europe. The consolidation of the confrontational positions of the United States, NATO and the European Union vis-à-vis our country, the unprecedented political and economic pressure on Russia and the breakdown in military cooperation all run counter to the OSCE guidelines for the formation of a pan-European security space.

Ms. Rodríguez Martínez (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Venezuela aligns its statement with the position expressed by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.18).

The transformations taking place in the international geopolitical context, the increase in bellicose rhetoric, the undermining of important multilateral instruments and the increase in unilateral actions by some nuclear States have led to the climate of instability and distrust that we are living in today, increasing the risk of conflict. That is why the implementation of actions that contribute to strengthening the international security architecture and the non-proliferation regime is essential for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Latin America and the Caribbean is a region that has historically made significant efforts in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. It is important to remember that ours was the first densely populated region to sign on to a legally binding instrument to prohibit and prevent the testing, use, manufacture, production or acquisition of nuclear weapons. It was also proclaimed a zone of peace by our Heads of State and Government within the framework of the second Community of Latin American and Caribbean States Summit, held in Havana in January 2014.

Venezuela firmly believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is a vital element in strengthening the non-proliferation regime at the

regional and global levels, which is why we support the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We therefore welcome the convening of a conference on the matter, in accordance with the General Assembly's decision 73/546, and the holding of its first session, which will take place in November and will be presided over by Jordan.

Venezuela deplores the decision of the United States of America to withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which is contrary to the objectives of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament as well as the spirit of dialogue and cooperation that must prevail if we are to ensure peaceful coexistence among nations.

Finally, our country emphasizes the vital importance of respect for multilateralism and the quest for concerted solutions through dialogue and negotiations, as enshrined in the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. A full version of my statement will be made available on PaperSmart.

Ms. Rahman (Malaysia): Malaysia associates itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and the Philippines, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (see A/C.1/74/PV.18).

Malaysia believes that the nuclear-weapon-free zones established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba and the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, as well as Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status, are of vital importance in enhancing global and regional peace. They strengthen the nuclear-non-proliferation regime and contribute to the realization of the objectives of nuclear disarmament. As a founding member of ASEAN and a party to the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) Treaty, Malaysia reaffirms the significance of such zones and treaties in the pursuit of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We emphasize the importance of realizing the overarching objectives of the SEANWFZ Treaty and its Protocol in accordance with the 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration and the ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together declaration, adopted by ASEAN leaders at the twenty-seventh ASEAN Summit in 2015. The accession of the nuclear-weapon States to the SEANWFZ Protocol remains imperative. Malaysia welcomes the consultations and continuing dialogue between ASEAN and the nuclear-

weapon States in resolving their long-overdue signing and ratification of the Protocol as soon as possible. We also affirm our commitment to working with the other ASEAN member States to actively pursue this endeavour, in line with the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint 2025.

Malaysia is concerned about the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reach a consensus on new measures regarding the process of establishing a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We affirm the need for the prompt establishment of such a zone, in accordance with Security Council resolution 487 (1981), paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and the relevant consensus resolutions of the General Assembly. Malaysia welcomes the convening of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, to be presided over by Jordan in November, in accordance with General Assembly decision 73/546. We call on all the States of the region to participate actively in the Conference in order to realize the establishment of the zone.

Malaysia also welcomes the hosting of the fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia, to be held in New York in April 2020. We hope it will succeed in promoting coordination and convergence in the implementation of the provisions of the nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties and in strengthening the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Our emerging security challenges will only accentuate the need for multilateral dialogue and action. Together with its partners from the region and beyond, Malaysia looks forward to exploring opportunities for an enhanced global security and disarmament agenda.

Mr. Fiallo Karolys (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador was last on the list of speakers today, and I am now experiencing some kind of extraterrestrial attack that is creating technical issues. But I do not want to waste the opportunity to take the floor. I want to point out that Ecuador's formal and definitive statement will be uploaded to the PaperSmart portal.

Ecuador aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/C.1/74/PV.18).

My delegation is proud to be part of a region of peace, not only because it was declared so by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) but also because it was the first densely populated region of the world to be designated a zone of peace, as established by the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Ecuador supports, and will continue to support, the work of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. We also support efforts to establish zones of peace throughout the world, because we believe that such zones contribute to the achievement of international peace and security.

Finally, I wish to thank the delegation of Peru for having coordinated draft resolution A/C.1/74/L.42, supporting the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which provides assistance to the States of our region.

I would note once again that our full statement will be uploaded to PaperSmart.

Mr. Menashe Moreno (Israel): Over the past decades, the Middle East has experienced challenges that have shaped the regional security architecture. The core struggle is between those countries that strive for stability and those countries and non-State actors that support terrorism and aim to destabilize the region in order to promote their radical agendas, taking regional security as their hostage.

Since the late 1970s, the radical regime in Iran has been exporting its revolutionary agenda to other countries in the Middle East and beyond. Iran's malicious activities are reflected in various ways: its attacks against the Arab Gulf, the establishment of extraterritorial missile bases and so on. Turning a blind eye to such clearly aggressive acts will only worsen the regional security dilemma.

Proliferation, in its various versions, has been a major problem in the Middle East. Iran and Syria are clear examples of countries that proliferate lethal weapons to terrorist organizations across the region. This proliferation includes surface-to-surface missiles, rockets and small arms and light weapons, and it disregards Security Council resolutions.

Unfortunately, the Middle East suffers from a culture of non-compliance with arms-control and non-proliferation treaties, violating the legal obligations that countries have undertaken. As long as this culture

exists, it will be impossible to promote any regional process. The international community's recognition and absolute rejection of this concept are the first steps required in order to solve this fundamental problem.

The international community and moderates in the Middle East must work together, adopting a proactive approach. Therefore, moderates in the Middle East should adopt a constructive approach rather than waste energy and resources on destructive agendas, which will lead us nowhere and make the radicals stronger. The State of Israel is part and parcel of the Middle East, in that it is both being threatened by destructive powers and terrorism but is also fighting those malicious elements. We are in the same boat, and we must work together to reach safe shores.

A full version of this statement will be uploaded on PaperSmart.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation associates itself with the statement of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries delivered by the representative of Indonesia (see A/C.1/74/PV.18).

In his recent speech before the General Assembly (see A/74/PV.5), President Rouhani warned that the Middle East region is on the edge of collapse, as a single blunder could spark a conflagration. The source of this tense situation can be traced to various factors, including the United States military presence and, above all, Israel's aggressive acts.

The main regional objectives of the United States are to secure military bases, sell more weaponry and facilitate the Israeli regime's aggression and occupation. While the United States pretends to support some countries of the region, recent incidents make clear how its reckless regional policy causes insecurity and instability in the region.

The Middle East region will become secure only when United States troops withdraw. Regional peace and stability can be guaranteed only by the region's countries, not through United States intervention or its economic terrorism. The aggressive policy of the United States in the Middle East has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians. The United States has been a force for bad and for death and destruction. For too long, it has made the wrong choices in our region and then blamed others, particularly Iran. The role of the United States in creating and assisting terrorist groups and using them as a proxy against

the independent countries of the region has resulted in catastrophes.

Likewise, Israel is attempting to increase hostility and chaos among Middle Eastern countries. Since its inception, that regime has been constantly engaged in a brutal and illegal occupation, brazen acts of terrorism, military aggression and the commission of all kinds of international crimes, with the backing of the United States. Israel is the main source and cause of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It refuses to accede to any international instrument banning weapons of mass destruction and mocks the credibility of such instruments, which constitute the components of the international security architecture.

The main lesson we can draw from recent developments in the Middle East is that security will not be achieved with American weapons, and security cannot be purchased from foreign Governments. The countries of the region should rely on their collective security collaboration. Iran's proposal for a coalition for hope, or the Hormuz peace initiative, under the United Nations umbrella, is aimed at involving the Middle Eastern countries in security cooperation.

Concerning the unfounded claims that the representative of the United Kingdom made about Iran, I would like to highlight that what is causing insecurity in the region is not Iran's policy but the United Kingdom's and some other countries' unconditional support of Israel as well as other non-State actors and terrorist groups.

Unless there is an indigenous regional effort to bring inclusive peace and security to the Middle East in general and the Persian Gulf subregion in particular, we will be engulfed in turmoil. Iran is committed to fulfilling its responsibility in contributing to the preservation of peace and security in these two strategic regions of the world.

The Acting Chair: The Committee has now heard from the last speaker on the cluster "Regional disarmament and security".

I shall now give the floor to those representatives who have requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

In that connection, I would like to remind all delegations that the first intervention is limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The statement made by the observer of the European Union (EU) yesterday (see A/C.1/PV.18) was replete with inaccurate information. The statement omitted any mention of the current cooperation between Syria and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. I would therefore like to inform her of the latest developments, especially the visit by the media team to Damascus.

Secondly, she claimed that we do not abide by the relevant conventions. Such claims are based on ignorance and total disregard for the facts. I would like to recall that my country has been party to the Chemical Weapons Convention since 2013 and that we have held approximately 24 rounds of talks in Damascus and The Hague. There is a permanent Syrian delegation in The Hague that is in constant coordination with the Secretariat to inform it of the latest developments. Also, in the interests of political education, I would like to inform the observer of the EU that, if it has any information or evidence supporting its accusations against my country, it should present it to the organization's headquarters in The Hague instead of wasting the Committee's time with political allegations and impeding its work.

Thirdly, the observer of the European Union accused my country and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS) of using chemical weapons. The accusation is proof that the observer is politically myopic and has no real understanding of the situation and of how my country and our allies have been combating ISIS and other forms of terrorism. It is also clear proof of a failure to monitor relevant developments, in particular statements by EU and United States officials and the fact that some chemical weapons were smuggled from Libya to Turkey, after which they were delivered to ISIS and the Al-Nusra Front and used in Khan Al-Assal. We have sent dozens of official public letters to the Security Council and the Office for Disarmament Affairs that include the names of people who have smuggled such weapons.

Nothing can absolve the European countries that have taken a position against my country of their responsibility for the crisis that Syria is still witnessing. It was those countries that supported the illegitimate separatist forces in north-east Syria, paving the way for growing and worsening terrorism, including in the country's north-west. They have done that by supporting terrorism and turning a blind eye to Turkey's activities.

With regard to the remarks by the representative of the United States, we all know that it is the United States that has used nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, including white phosphorus, enriched uranium and other internationally banned weapons. The world has seen clear evidence of that in newborn babies in Viet Nam, Iraq and many other countries. It is the United States that is violating conventions on weapons of mass destruction and deploying nuclear weapons on the territory of non-nuclear-weapon States, in clear violation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. And many countries believe that the United States has no plans to destroy its huge stockpile of chemical weapons. It comes up with a new pretext for that every day. At the same time, it is modernizing biological weapons in clandestine labs in more than 25 countries.

The United States also protects Israel's repudiation of its obligations with regard to accession to any of the conventions or treaties banning weapons of mass destruction and to the subjection of its facilities to verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Israeli entity is trying to evade its responsibilities under a flood of resolutions on Israel by accusing other States, in order to divert attention from the international consensus that the real threat in the Middle East is Israel's weapons of mass destruction.

Ms. Zuo Rui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The statement by the representative of the United States just now was slanderous. He distorted facts and made malicious accusations about China that we categorically reject. I am sure that every other country would render a just verdict if asked who is actually ruining global and regional peace and security.

Many countries have spoken up and expressed concerns about the collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and about the fact that the United States has lowered the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons in its Nuclear Posture Review. Many have also expressed their dismay at the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and have urged it to respond actively to expectations regarding the extension of the New START Treaty by Russia and the United States in order to ensure that its bilateral nuclear-disarmament process can be maintained, sustained and further developed, preventing further erosion of the existing strategic security and arms-control system. That is what the international community is calling for. Making irresponsible

accusations about other countries does not absolve an individual country of its own responsibilities.

On the issue of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), China's position and measures are well known. We will not allow any country to make accusations about us in that regard. China has unconditionally provided security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, and we urge the other nuclear-weapon States to make the same commitment. We have been urging the five permanent members of the Security Council to restart dialogue with ASEAN's member States in order to address the remaining issues related to the signing and ratification of the Southeast Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty. China has already made preparations in that regard and hopes to sign the Treaty as soon as possible in order to promote and contribute to regional security in the ASEAN region.

The issues in the South Asia region are a historical legacy and should be addressed appropriately and peacefully in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the relevant Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements. The parties should refrain from taking any unilateral action with a view to changing the status quo. We hope to see the dispute properly controlled and managed, and stability restored in bilateral relations.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to exercise my right of reply in response to the statements made by a number of States.

First, the military arrangements and activities of the Russian Federation are strictly defensive. Unlike those of the NATO countries, the exercises of the Russian armed forces are conducted within its national territory and are related to the work of protecting our territory and its people. The NATO exercises, on the other hand, cover an enormous geographic area, both on land and at sea, and are often flagrantly anti-Russian in nature. Our country's military activity is chiefly determined by the presence and level of existing threats. It should be pointed out that the threats to Russia's national security are constantly increasing, anti-Russian rhetoric is increasing and there is a growing presence of foreign military contingents, primarily from NATO members, along Russia's borders. The statements made recently at the meetings of the First Committee of the General

Assembly at its seventy-fourth session are evidence of the increase in those threats.

Secondly, the representative of Georgia complained about the occupation of part of her country. I would like to remind that it was the criminal actions of Mikheil Saakashvili's regime against the people of South Ossetia and the constant threat of military incursions in Abkhazia that forced the people of those two countries — two republics — within Georgian borders to choose independence in 2008. The Russian military bases are located in Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the basis of agreements with those States, and therefore entirely legally. Russia's Transcaucasian military presence is a factor for stability, peace and the secure development of the people of countries that were once extremely friendly — Georgia, South Ossetia and Abkhazia. That is an undeniable fact. It is also a fact that, in August 2008, the compelled intervention by the Russian military forces to bring peace in Georgia saved the South Ossetian people from genocide. The aim of the Saakashvili regime was their complete destruction, and the Russian military operation spared Georgia the eternal shame and stigma of fratricide. Georgia should be grateful to Russia for the fact that the blood of the South Ossetian people, who were subjected to a sudden and terrible attack on 8 August 2008, is not on Georgian hands.

Lastly, regarding the talk about Russia's aggressive policies, I would like to draw the Committee's attention to what real aggression looks like. Aggression is the bombing of Serbia in 1999, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the bombing of Libya in 2010 and 2011 and the invasion of Syria. That is aggression. What right do the States that participated in all of those acts of aggression have to call Russia's peace-loving policies and the humanitarian assistance that it provides to Donbas and Luhansk acts of aggression? What gives those States the right to call the Crimean people's peaceful referendum on unification with Russia aggression?

The Acting Chair: I ask the representative of Russia to conclude his statement.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Thank you for the reminder, Madam Chair. Since there were many anti-Russian statements, I would just like one more minute before I conclude. All who talk about the aggressive nature of Russia's foreign policy should ask themselves all of those questions.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): I am exercising my right of reply on behalf of the 29 member States of NATO with regard to the statement by the representative of the Russian Federation.

The Euro-Atlantic security environment has become less stable and predictable as a result of Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea — which we do not recognize — and its ongoing destabilization of eastern Ukraine. That is compounded by Russia's continued violation, non-implementation and circumvention of numerous obligations and commitments in the realms of arms control and confidence- and security-building measures. The Allied presence on the territory of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, at the invitation of their own Governments, is part of NATO's strengthened deterrence and defence posture in response to those actions, and it demonstrates our solidarity, determination and ability to defend Alliance territory. That posture is complemented by NATO's openness to a periodic, focused and meaningful dialogue with a Russia that is willing to engage, with a view to avoiding misunderstandings, miscalculation and unintended escalation and to increasing transparency and predictability.

The Alliance posture is defensive in nature, proportionate and demonstrates our respect for the rules-based European security architecture from which non-NATO European States also directly benefit.

Mr. Sharma (India): The representative of the United Kingdom made a reference to India in her statement. I would like to underline that India has subscribed to The Hague Code of Conduct since June 2016 and has also been a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime since that date. That is for the purposes of the record.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I would like to exercise my delegation's right of reply to a number of comments made this afternoon.

Regarding the comments by the representative of Islamic Republic of Iran, quite frankly, Iran must be willing to operate like a normal country and change its malign behaviour. Unfortunately, while my President has said that we are open to diplomacy with Iran, Iran has continued to meet our diplomacy with violence. Iran's recent attack on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia was unacceptable and unprecedented, and it underscores the continued challenge that Iran poses to international peace and security. The international community must

come together to counter its aggressive, reckless and threatening behaviour.

With regard to the comments by the delegation of Syria, the United States has made it clear to the Syrian regime that the use of chemical weapons will not be tolerated. Last month, on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly here in New York, United States Secretary of State Michael Pompeo reiterated that same stark warning after announcing the United States assessment that the Al-Assad regime used chlorine as a weapon in an attack on 19 May in Latakia province in Syria. The Al-Assad regime must reverse its pattern of destructive behaviour towards its own people and take tangible steps to achieve peace and stability.

Finally, regarding the comments by the representative of the People's Republic of China, the United States remains committed to effective arms control that advances the security of the United States, its allies and partners, that is verifiable and enforceable and that includes partners that comply responsibly with their obligations. We need a new era of arms control today, one in which China, for the first time, is at the negotiating table and willing to reduce nuclear risks rather than heighten them. Today undemocratic regimes such as China are expanding their arsenals and engaging in activities that impede our ability to make progress on disarmament. That is the key to this dilemma. They are revisionist in their aims and bent on deploying new, destabilizing weapons. If that trend continues, China's increasing military might will eventually provide it with the means to dismantle the liberal democratic international order on which the security and prosperity of all us depend. We need to be aware of that.

China's military expansion is aimed at establishing regional dominance and global influence. It has amassed a vast intermediate-range ground-launched-missile arsenal that is under no international restraints of any kind. The United States has no such missiles. China is expanding its nuclear arsenal and meanwhile resisting meaningful bilateral dialogue with the United States on nuclear arms control and risk reduction. Precisely because China is the least transparent member of the five permanent members of the Security Council and is engaged in an ongoing arms build-up, it is hard to take China at its word on nuclear issues. Quite frankly, and in conclusion, China must come to realize that its continued silence on these issues is destabilizing.

Mr. Alharsha (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to exercise my right of reply in response to what the Syrian representative said about the transfer of chemical weapons from my country, Libya. We have already responded to those allegations, which the Syrian representative has been repeating for years without concrete evidence or compelling proof. I can assure the Committee that Libya destroyed its chemical weapons under the supervision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and with the help of some friendly countries. The destruction process was carried out in the Federal Republic of Germany.

I do not know why the Syrian representative insists on making these accusations about Libya, as if Syria had no chemical weapons of its own and did not produce or possess such weapons. The only people mandated to detect those chemical weapons, what kinds they are and how they were used are the verification teams. We hope the Syrian representative can be accurate and responsible when repeating such allegations in the future, allegations that we are sick of and that have nothing to do with the truth.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The response to my Libyan colleague is that we never said that the toxic chemical substances and chemical weapons that were transported from Libya were Libyan in origin. That is another issue that we or other bodies could investigate. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this right of reply, we did not say that the weapons were Libyan-made. We said that they were transported from Libya on a civilian aircraft.

I have noted in previous meetings that the representatives of the Israeli entity have constantly repeated false information and turned the truth on its head in order to hide the crimes that it has committed. The Israeli entity is the gateway for terrorism in our region in all its forms, which we are all familiar with, as well as for weapons of mass destruction. It threatened to use nuclear weapons during the Arab-Israeli liberation war of October 1973. Israel's proven international involvement in the illicit global trade in arms encourages terrorism and its proliferation while protecting drug gangs and separatist movements worldwide. It has provided armed terrorist groups, specifically Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front, with weapons, munitions, materiel and information, in addition to toxic chemical substances and chemical weapons, especially missiles equipped with chemical warheads.

The representatives of the United States are not in a position to accuse anyone of anything. We all remember the lie about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that led to Iraq's invasion and destruction. Together with other States, the United States regime is responsible for transporting toxic chemical substances and weapons while training terrorists from Da'esh and the Al-Nusra Front on how to use them. Successive United States Administrations have used those terrorist groups to destabilize many States, including my country. Their cooperation with the terrorist organization Da'esh has been proved in video footage. They traded positions among themselves and moved command centres from one area to another without firing a single shot.

Ms. Agladze (Georgia): I am using my right of reply to respond to the comments by the representative of the Russian Federation. The Russian delegation told us today that Russia is not a party to any conflicts in the area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe or anywhere else in the world. That is simply outrageous. Let me remind the Committee that invasion, full-blown war and occupation are quite simply acts of aggression against a sovereign State. Furthermore, such actions violate all the fundamental principles and norms on which the United Nations is founded. As a result of the Russian aggression, hundreds of thousands of Georgians have been subjected to ethnic cleansing and two regions of the country are still occupied.

First, with regard to Russia's illusions about the so-called crimes committed by Georgia, which allegedly conducted an aggressive bombing of its own citizens that also resulted in the death of peacekeepers, I would like to remind the Committee that the report of the European Union's Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, which said that it was the Russian Federation that invaded Georgia, is in clear contradiction to what the Russian delegation said.

Secondly, the International Criminal Court (ICC) currently has a case before it about the war crimes that were committed during the Russian aggression by the Russian forces and local militias under Russia's control, which is clearly stated in the ICC's Pre-Trial Chamber decision on the issue. I would advise the Russian Federation to cooperate with the international community and the ICC and allow access to the occupied Georgian territories instead of twisting the reality and putting the blame on somebody else.

Mr. Belousov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I will be brief. When the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation was signed, NATO promised that it would not expand. Since 1997 the NATO alliance has seen four waves of expansion. It is therefore NATO, not Russia, that has been violating its own commitments. There is anti-Russian rhetoric at every annual NATO summit, and decisions are taken that hardly reflect the willingness of the Alliance to maintain a dialogue with our country on matters of European security. As far as the dialogue itself is concerned, NATO has still not reversed its 1 April 2014 decision to cease all contact with the Russian Federation on security matters. Furthermore, NATO is constantly expanding its offensive potential along Russia's borders and conducting military exercises that are offensive in nature.

With regard to the statement by the representative of Georgia, it is not Russia that is manipulating public opinion among the international community but rather Georgia that is doing so. It is important to read very carefully the documents prepared by the investigative commission of the so-called incident of August 2008. Russia conducted a peace operation and brought troops into Georgia, but that was a response to the genocide of the people of South Ossetia, and that is a fact that cannot be denied, because it has been established in the very documents that the representative herself mentioned earlier. With regard to the occupation, I want to say once again that the Russian military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia is there on the legal basis of agreements signed with those States concerning their protection, as they themselves are not in a position to exercise the right to self-defence when there are calls from certain political leaders in Georgia for resolving the Abkhazia and South Ossetia issues by force.

Ms. Zuo Rui (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The representative of the United States used the same hackneyed and clichéd terms in his comments just now, once again making unwarranted and unfounded accusations about China that we categorically reject. My delegation has repeatedly described China's position during the First Committee's deliberations, and I will not repeat it here.

Ms. Bonkoungou (Burkina Faso), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

We urge the United States not to impose its own flawed reasoning and judgment on others. It is merely smearing and slandering China in order to find excuses to distance itself from its irresponsible and unilateral actions, which are disrupting the existing international arms-control regime.

Mr. Bravaco (United States of America): I will be brief on this second round. To the Syrian delegation, we simply repeat that the Al-Assad regime must reverse its pattern of destructive behaviour towards its own people, take tangible steps to achieve peace and security and cease the use of chemical weapons against its own people. It is as simple as that. The Al-Assad regime will be called to account for its crimes against its own people through the use of chemical weapons.

With regard to the delegation of China, in order to prevent further deterioration in the security environment and improve the prospects for disarmament, the United States calls on all like-minded States to coordinate in finding new and better ways to persuade China to change course and cease its aggressive policies, which undermine the rules-based order and make it dangerous for responsible democratic States to lower their defences. Similarly, democratic States should call out China's use of authoritarian satellites to stymie progress. That call to action is not addressed to America's traditional democratic allies alone, although they remain essential to our mutual security. It is also a call to all States Members of the United Nations from every region of the world that value the democratic way of life and share a sincere interest in further progress on disarmament. Together we should demand that China join the United States and the Russian Federation at the negotiating table in good faith in order to initiate a new era of arms control for the sake of international peace and security. There are three chairs at that table. We are waiting for China to engage.

Mr. Moreno (Israel): I would like to exercise my right of reply and to mention a few facts concerning Syria and the claims made by the representative of the Al-Assad regime. We should recall that, in the early 1980s, Hafez Al-Assad used chemical weapons in Hama. It is a fact that approximately 10,000 people perished in that chemical-weapon attack by Hafez Al-Assad in Syria in the early 1980s. As we say, the apple does not fall far from the tree. A few years later, in several locations in Syria, his son, Bashar Al-Assad, is still using chemical weapons. What are the numbers now — 10,000, 100,000, 200,000, 300,000, 700,000? He

is not alone. He has the support of his ally, the Iranian regime and its proxies, and the massacre continues. At the same time, we have refugees all over the place. Some have also come to Israel. They are children, boys, girls, elderly people and women. I know that they call them terrorists, but the Committee can trust me when I say that they are not. At one point we had to evacuate sick Israelis to hospitals in central Israel because the hospitals in the north were fully occupied with extra beds and no more room, and the massacre is still ongoing. It is time to put a stop to all of that. Since the Bashar Al-Assad regime joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, it has been using chemical weapons of various kinds all over Syria. It must be held accountable for that, and attribution is a very important element in that regard.

Mr. Balouji (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to exercise my right of reply to respond to the absurd statement by the representative of the Israeli regime. As usual, of course, we do not want to dignify such statements with a response, but we have to react to and highlight the crimes that the regime commits on a permanent basis.

It is a regime that is occupying the territory of a defenceless nation, Palestine. It is a regime that commits crimes against humanity and war crimes, and that continues to violate international human rights and international humanitarian law. It is permanently violating Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. We therefore reject all those allegations because we know they are crocodile tears. That regime must change its behaviour in the region and the occupied territories.

The Acting Chair: The Committee will now begin its consideration of the cluster “Disarmament machinery”. We have a long list of speakers, so I appeal to all delegations for their full cooperation in respecting the time limits to enable the Committee to avoid falling behind schedule.

I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia to introduce draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.33 and A/C.1/74/L.34.

Mr. Situmorang (Indonesia): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM).

NAM is concerned about the continued erosion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament,

non-proliferation and arms control. We are determined to continue promoting multilateralism as the core principle of negotiations in those areas and as the only sustainable approach to addressing those issues in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. Enhancing the effectiveness of United Nations disarmament machinery is therefore a shared objective. NAM believes that the main difficulty lies in an absence of political will on the part of some States where achieving progress is concerned, particularly on nuclear disarmament.

NAM reaffirms the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament and reiterates its call to the CD to agree by consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work without any further delay, taking into account the security interests of all States. We strongly reject any politicization of the work of the CD and call on all States Member of the United Nations to fully respect its rules of procedures and agreed methods of work.

We also underline the importance and relevance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and again call on Member States to display the political will and flexibility needed to enable the Commission to agree on recommendations for achieving the objectives of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are seriously concerned about the UNDC’s inability to convene its organizational and substantive sessions in 2019 in a formal setting, and we hope that, by addressing all the underlying issues among the delegations concerned, the UNDC can hold its substantive sessions in 2020 in a formal setting so as to fulfil its mandate by adopting agreed substantive recommendations.

NAM underscores the importance of convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which would offer an opportunity to review the most critical aspects of the disarmament process and mobilize the international community and public opinion in favour of the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the control and reduction of conventional weapons.

NAM is deeply concerned about the continued lack of adequate representation of NAM countries in the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs. We therefore request that the Secretary-General and High Representative take steps to ensure proper, balanced

and equitable representation in the Office. We call for transparency and a strict application of the principle of equitable geographical representation, especially in the composition of any groups of governmental experts established in the areas of disarmament and international security. NAM also underlines the importance of transparency and openness in the work of such groups.

Under this cluster, NAM is presenting draft resolutions A/C.1/74/L.33 and A/C.1/74/L.34, entitled “United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament” and “Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament”, respectively, for which we would welcome everyone’s support.

Finally, NAM notes with concern the increasing trend towards the submission of competing proposals addressing the same topics under the same agenda items. We want to underscore that this trend could undermine the credibility and consistency of the outcomes of the United Nations disarmament machinery, as well as its functioning, in addition to sending confusing signals to Member States, the Secretariat and the international community. We encourage all Member States to cooperate constructively in order to reach agreements on the relevant topics with a view to preserving the principles and objectives of multilateral diplomacy. NAM urges all countries to work together cooperatively and to demonstrate their political commitment concretely, including here in the First Committee, so as to ensure that the disarmament machinery can achieve its full potential for fostering global peace and security. Our full statement will be available online.

Mr. Laouani (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to align the Group of Arab States with the statement just made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Arab Group’s quest to achieve the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an integral part of our principled commitment to achieving nuclear disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons, as the ultimate and top priority of disarmament and international security efforts. That is in line with the outcome of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We would like to point out that United Nations disarmament activities

and mechanisms are based solely on those special sessions and cannot be amended except through another special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

The Arab Group looks forward to the possibility of holding a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and to achieving concrete results in addressing the many developments in the international arena related to the increase in threats to international security. The international disarmament regime is currently witnessing important and historical changes such as that represented by the adoption of a first binding international instrument that prohibits nuclear weapons while delegitimizing their possession, transfer, dissemination, development, use or threat of use, with a view to eventually getting rid of them altogether.

The Arab Group reiterates the importance of concerted international efforts to address the serious setback suffered by the NPT regime as a result of the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We must seek a successful outcome for the 2020 Review Conference through a balanced and comprehensive outcome document that clearly addresses the challenges to the three pillars of the NPT, foremost of which is achieving nuclear disarmament. We must also seek concrete progress on the issue of establishing a zone in the Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, which is an essential condition for the success of the Review Conference.

We also reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the only forum established for the specific purpose of negotiating disarmament treaties. We emphasize that the current deadlock in its work is not necessarily the result of shortcomings in its mechanisms but rather of a lack of political will. We therefore stress the need to expedite efforts to reactivate the role of the Conference in implementing its negotiating mandate, especially with regard to nuclear disarmament. The Arab Group believes that the topics on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament are consistent with the objectives and priorities agreed on internationally. We must not focus on imposing new commitments in the area of non-proliferation at the expense of nuclear disarmament in a way that leads to imbalances between the commitments of nuclear States in the area of nuclear disarmament on the one hand and the commitments of

non-nuclear States in the area of non-proliferation on the other hand.

The Arab Group has repeatedly expressed its disappointment regarding the inability of the Disarmament Commission to reach consensus on any recommendations for many years, with the exception of the relative progress made during the previous session. That is due to the non-constructive positions of some nuclear States that continue to impede achieving consensus on nuclear disarmament procedures.

Our full statement will be published on PaperSmart.

Ms. Carey (Bahamas): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the 14 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) in the thematic debate on disarmament machinery. The full version of this statement will be available on PaperSmart.

At the outset, allow me to reiterate the significance that CARICOM attaches to the United Nations disarmament machinery and the work of related mechanisms that fall under it. Growing insecurities in international security and cooperation, manifest within the disarmament machinery itself, reinforce the need for innovative and enhanced dialogue and redoubled commitment towards the goal of disarmament.

CARICOM underscores the need to maintain the momentum on progress made within the Conference on Disarmament (CD). We continue to encourage the prompt resumption of negotiations within the CD, as it remains as source of grave frustration that significant progress has not been made with respect to the substantive programme of work of the Conference.

It is our fervent hope that, within the Conference on Disarmament and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, delegations will work steadfastly in a transparent and inclusive manner to overcome the paralysis that has prevented agreement in key disarmament deliberations. CARICOM registers its regret that the Disarmament Commission was unable to hold formal substantive meetings during its most recent session, although we remain encouraged by the flexibility and commitment of delegations to make progress on the work of the Commission in an informal setting.

CARICOM looks forward to more robust movement within the current cycle and to engaging in meaningful discussions so as to build consensus on several recommendations.

CARICOM expresses its appreciation to Mrs. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) for the invaluable role of UNODA as the coordinator of regional and global disarmament initiatives. CARICOM also notes with appreciation the United Nations Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament. Our region has benefited from the Programme and has several alumni, with our own most recent 2019 fellow being from Trinidad and Tobago.

There can be no sustainable development without security, justice, good governance and peace. CARICOM attaches tremendous importance to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, in the context of disarmament, Goal 16. Regional and global disarmament approaches are mutually complementary and must be pursued simultaneously.

In that regard, CARICOM commends the stellar contributions of the Regional Centres. We wish to highlight our appreciation for the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC) in Peru, which has over the past year undertaken more than 70 technical and legal assistance and training activities to support States in the region in their efforts to implement disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation instruments. Many CARICOM countries have benefited, and continue to benefit, from support extended by UNLIREC. CARICOM reiterates the importance of synergies in disarmament and arms control and wishes to underscore its support for UNLIREC's emphasis on gender and the 2030 Agenda.

CARICOM also expresses its appreciation for the voluntary contributions from Member States to UNLIREC and to the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Voluntary Trust Fund. It is pleased to note that Antigua and Barbuda became the first CARICOM country to participate in the Trust Fund, holding a regional workshop on ATT implementation in August. CARICOM also takes this opportunity to applaud the leading role taken by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to commend the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.

CARICOM maintains the critical importance of nuclear-weapon-free zones as confidence-building instruments that strengthen nuclear non-proliferation and advance nuclear disarmament. CARICOM

members are proud States parties to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. CARICOM encourages States to continue their support of the triennial resolution on the Treaty.

CARICOM reaffirms its support of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. In the past year alone, three CARICOM States — Saint Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago and Dominica — ratified the Treaty, and two CARICOM States — Grenada and Saint Kitts and Nevis — signed it. We are of the firm belief that this Treaty, along with others, fosters workable, humanitarian-based approaches to advance disarmament. To date, nine CARICOM States are signatories to the Treaty and five have ratified it.

CARICOM also recognizes the vital contributions of civil society, in particular non-governmental organizations, in the maintenance of peace and security. Engagement will need to be undertaken with all stakeholders as we try to respond to new and emerging technologies.

There is still much work to be done to fulfil our mandates on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. CARICOM remains committed to doing its part to support the critical work of the disarmament machinery and calls on all Member States to demonstrate the required collective will to achieve a safe and peaceful world.

Mr. Srivihok (Thailand): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Viet Nam and my country, Thailand.

Given the persistent threats to international security upon which Member States have expressed strong and uncompromising positions, it is necessary now more than ever to preserve and strengthen the nature, role and purpose of the various forums under the United Nations disarmament machinery.

ASEAN recognizes the First Committee as the most inclusive platform for comprehensive discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation. Dialogues in the Committee must strive to be constructive, relevant and in good faith. We call on Member States to exercise

flexibility and compromise for the success of the Committee's deliberations.

ASEAN recognizes the importance of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as a multilateral negotiating body on disarmament-related treaties. Last July, the ASEAN Secretary-General, His Excellency Dato Lim Jock Hoi, delivered a statement at the Conference on Disarmament, reflecting our strong support for that important disarmament body. We encourage all States members of the CD to strengthen their political will so that the CD can fulfil its negotiating mandate. In the near future, we hope that the Conference will enlarge its membership and increase its interactions with relevant stakeholders in order to bring fresh perspectives to the body.

ASEAN regrets that the United Nations Disarmament Commission could not hold its substantive session this year. We encourage all Member States to work together constructively to overcome outstanding issues that hinder our collective efforts in that body. We call on all Member States to demonstrate stronger political commitment to preserving multilateralism, the essential foundation on which our work on disarmament and non-proliferation rests.

Recognizing the valuable contributions of regional approaches to disarmament, ASEAN supports the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which actively provides resources and fosters cooperation on disarmament in the region.

The disarmament machinery must keep pace with the rapidly evolving security landscape and advancements in science and technology. ASEAN recognizes the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to disarmament. We also acknowledge the links between disarmament efforts and other United Nations frameworks. The existing disarmament machinery should therefore advance disarmament, particularly within the United Nations framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and it should take the voices of stakeholders into account.

In conclusion, disarmament and non-proliferation issues must be seen not just through a political and security lens, but as a cross-cutting matter that involves such aspects as political, security, economic and sociocultural issues. With that comprehensive outlook in mind, we stand ready to collaborate with all partners to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations

disarmament machinery. The international community has a shared responsibility for that.

Mr. Hwang (France) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Presidents of the disarmament conventions, that is, Norway, President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty; Pakistan, President of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; Switzerland, President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions; and my country, France, President of the Biological Weapons Convention.

We would like to underscore the seriousness of the financial difficulties affecting the disarmament conventions and hampering the smooth functioning of the disarmament machinery. As we all know, in the past few years meetings approved by all States parties have been cut short owing to a lack of funds, and a number of unacceptable cost-cutting measures have been taken, including sacrificing interpretation for our meetings and the translation of official documents. In addition, the precarious financial situation also threatens the very existence of some of the Implementation Support Units that are essential to the implementation and strengthening of the conventions they serve. In the light of those challenges, we greatly appreciate and commend the past efforts of the successive Presidents of the conventions to address the financial crisis. They have led inclusive and transparent processes aimed at adopting new financial measures to discourage non-payment and keep the conventions afloat.

While those efforts are welcome, we consider the arrangements to be temporary and ultimately insufficient. The financial problems undermining the progress of our work and the credibility of the disarmament conventions require a permanent solution. The only viable option is to address the problem of non-payment and ensure that arrears are paid on time and in full. We want to point out that States are required to pay in advance of meetings in order for them to take place. For conventions administered by the United Nations, this is part of the current system designed and approved by Member States, including the use of Umoja and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) for United Nations finances. Umoja and IPSAS were introduced to increase the transparency and sustainability of the United Nations financial system, and their introduction is not the reason why our work has been hampered. In that context, we would like to remind the Committee that States parties have considered certain measures to

discourage non-payment. We will continue to monitor with concern the financial status of the conventions and encourage States parties to consider additional measures to ensure that our disarmament architecture is financially sound.

Lastly, we once again call on States to ensure that they pay on time and in full and that all debts to the instruments concerned are settled as soon as possible. As long as there are arrears, the financial problems will persist. That is why measures that specifically address the issue of non-payment are important.

Ms. Tichy Fisslberger (Austria) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of Francophone Ambassadors to the United Nations Office at Geneva from the member and observer countries of the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Our countries would like to reaffirm their commitment to multilingualism, which is an essential factor in harmonious communication among the States Members of the United Nations. Multilingualism fosters tolerance and ensures the effective and increased participation of all in the Organization's work processes, as well as enhanced efficiency, better results and greater involvement. Our countries are committed to respect for multilingualism in all negotiating forums and by all treaties and conventions that adopt the six official languages of the United Nations in their rules of procedure. Owing to a recurring cash-flow problem caused by some States' non-payment of their contributions, a decision has recently been made with regard to several conventions and treaties to hold meetings without interpretation or translation. We regret that decision, which prevents many States from participating fully in the work of the Organization. We call for mobilizing a general effort in order to safeguard multilingualism and the inclusive climate in which the work of the conventions should be conducted.

Our countries would also like to reaffirm their keen interest in the decision to establish the Disarmament Fellowship Programme, as outlined in paragraph 108 of the outcome document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2). Since its establishment 40 years ago, the Programme has trained a large number of officials from Member States, many of whom now hold key positions of responsibility in the disarmament field in the public administration of their countries. This essential

programme is an important joint achievement of the First Committee, and its curriculum is being enriched every year. The training programme and the quality of the students selected by States make it an indispensable disarmament event.

Our countries would like to see this important Programme benefit from the introduction of multilingualism so that every country's State officials have equal access to it. As recalled in resolution 73/73, the assistance offered by the Programme to Member States enables officials from many countries, particularly developing countries, to better follow ongoing bilateral and multilateral deliberations and negotiations on disarmament. That assistance will be all the more useful if it benefits from multilingualism, which is a guarantee of effective multilateralism.

Finally, our countries are convinced that increasing the accessibility of the training programme will foster partnership and cooperation among States and the United Nations bodies that participate in the study programme.

The Acting Chair: I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Ms. Homolkova (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with the statement.

The EU reiterates its support for the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. The international community bears a collective responsibility to ensure that those forums remain relevant and can achieve results in line with their mandates. We are grateful for the support of the Secretary-General and the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in that regard.

We are deeply concerned about the erosion of the rules-based multilateral system, an example of which is the frequent attempts we are seeing to undermine the integrity of international bodies and even the disarmament machinery, including during this session of the First Committee. The First Committee should focus on non-proliferation and disarmament issues and on the current major challenges to our collective

security, and it should identify concrete measures to address them rather than mechanically updating previously adopted resolutions. Further consideration should be given to biennializing or triennializing draft resolutions and refraining from requests for routine reporting. We are encouraged that relevant gender considerations are being included in an increasing number of draft resolutions, notably on conventional weapons, and that there is an increasing awareness of the importance of the equal participation of women and men.

The Conference on Disarmament should fulfil its crucial function of negotiating multilateral disarmament treaties, and it could also formulate other instruments and norms, such as guidelines and codes of conduct. The EU's long-standing priority in the CD is to immediately commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, and we support starting such negotiations in accordance with document CD/1299 and the mandate it contains. We deeply regret that it has not been possible to reach consensus on negotiating a mandate for a fissile-material cut-off treaty in the CD for more than 20 years. We urgently need to see political will on the part of its members if we are to put the CD back on track. We should advance substantive technical work and broaden areas of agreement so that we are better prepared to start negotiations when the overall context allows. We should build on the work of the five subsidiary bodies, which proved useful in 2018.

We must modernize the CD's working methods. The working paper submitted by the Netherlands provides an excellent starting point for seeing how we can avoid protracted procedural debates at the beginning of each year. We welcome the early engagement among the six countries holding presidency functions in 2020 and their intention to increase cooperation. The EU supports the enlargement of the CD, which currently has only 65 members. More than 40 countries, including 12 EU member States, are waiting to become members of the CD. We call for appointing a special coordinator as soon as possible to lead substantive consultations on expanding the membership and lay out possible scenarios. We encourage engagement with civil society, academia, industry and research institutions, building on the Civil Society Forum initiative of the former Secretary-General of the CD.

We deeply regret that it was not possible to hold a formal meeting of the Disarmament Commission

this year. We cannot allow yet another platform of the disarmament machinery to fall victim to issues that are not related to its substantive work.

We greatly value the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) as a stand-alone, autonomous institution of the disarmament machinery. In view of UNIDIR's forthcoming fortieth anniversary, we would like to appeal to all Member States to consider a more sustainable funding structure and operating model that would make it less dependent on voluntary contributions.

We are deeply concerned about the critical financial situation across the United Nations system. The only sustainable solution to the crisis is ensuring that all parties comply with their financial obligations. Once again, we strongly urge States that have not yet done so to pay their contributions in full and on time and to settle their arrears, thereby enabling the effective functioning of the multilateral institutions and instruments on which we all depend. We would like to remind the Committee that the EU has continued to provide significant support to a number of treaties, conventions and other agreements, which also enables the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and UNIDIR to carry out various projects and activities. A full version of the EU's statement will be published online.

Mr. Masméjean (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I would like to address three issues with respect to our disarmament mechanisms.

First, we are concerned about the impasses affecting various bodies of the disarmament machinery, including the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as well as the proceedings of our own First Committee, which are marred by organizational matters that reduce the time available to address substantive issues. We should be able to rely on a multilateral and fully functional disarmament machinery, and the efforts to overcome the impasses affecting our disarmament bodies are therefore more important than ever. In particular, we hope that the successive 2020 presidencies of the CD will take forward the discussions initiated this year on the possibility of enabling the CD to return to the way it dealt with its programme of work until the mid-1990s.

Secondly, arrears in payments continue to affect many disarmament conventions and treaties. This year the formal meetings of those instruments once again had to be shortened or held in an informal format. We

again call on all States in arrears with their payments to settle them as soon as possible. While we welcome the measures that have been taken by various disarmament conventions to strengthen their financial stability, significant challenges remain. In particular, we should expedite the establishment of measures to improve the cash-flow situation, which will have to be consistent with United Nations financial rules and take into consideration the national budgets of States parties.

Lastly, we would like to welcome the institutional reforms implemented by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which have already enabled it to strengthen its activities and its support to various negotiation processes and to better respond to the expectations of the entire United Nations membership. There is one important issue still outstanding, which is that of the contribution to UNIDIR from the regular budget of the United Nations. That contribution has been consistently reduced so that it now represents only 9 per cent of the Institute's budget. Moreover, voluntary contributions to the UNIDIR core budget are still extremely inadequate. We should make it a priority to take a firm decision on that contribution at the next session of the First Committee, when UNIDIR marks its fortieth anniversary. I will stop there. The full version of our statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Ms. Smith (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union, and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is the only place where we can negotiate effective disarmament measures that are binding on all the relevant actors. If we are not able to start formal negotiations for the time being, we can and must use that unique body properly to prepare the ground for when that time comes. It was therefore disappointing that the CD was unable to agree on how to organize its time in 2019 to build on the momentum of the 2018 subsidiary bodies. The draft decision submitted by the United Kingdom presidency would have done that, and it would have helped move the CD towards developing negotiating mandates on its four core agenda items. But it was blocked by a small number of member States, apparently for political reasons. We were encouraged, however, by the constructive discussion, under the presidency of Viet Nam, on the way forward, and in particular by the working paper presented by the Netherlands. We hope that all CD member States will reflect on that and

actively support Algeria and the other five presidencies for 2020 in adopting a programme of work that enables the CD to focus on the substantive issues on its agenda. As for the United Nations Disarmament Commission, we regret that, despite tireless efforts, it did not hold a formal session this year. We hope that in 2020, the last session in this cycle, it can be allowed to resume its work.

The United Kingdom welcomes and appreciates the contribution made by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) over the past year by ensuring that we have access to the latest research and diverse voices from within and beyond the United Nations system. The United Kingdom was pleased to provide the seed funding for UNIDIR's new project on integrating conventional arms control into conflict prevention and management, which seeks to better integrate conventional arms control with the work of the United Nations on peace and security.

The disarmament machinery can function only if it is properly funded. Too often we have seen meetings cancelled and Implementation Support Units undermined by the failure of some States to pay their contributions on time and in full. While we can and must adopt measures in the various conventions to make them more sustainable, the only solution is for States to pay their dues. We urge those with large arrears to settle them forthwith. We look forward to working with all delegations to improve transparency and build trust across the United Nations disarmament machinery over the coming year.

Mr. Elhomosany (Egypt): Egypt attaches immense importance to the United Nations disarmament machinery and considers disarmament and arms control to be an essential pillar of the mandate of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security, which remains the *raison d'être* of the Organization. The stalemate in disarmament efforts is not necessarily the result of defects in the machinery itself as much as it is a reflection of the lack of political will on the part of some States that seek to maintain absolute military dominance and that believe in deterrence rather than collaborative and collective security.

The failure of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to adopt a balanced and comprehensive programme of work for more than 23 years demands immediate action to rectify the situation, which we believe can be achieved only by beginning negotiations on the total, verifiable

and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons, with specific benchmarks and timelines. Similar efforts are also needed to revitalize the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and to enable it to adopt recommendations on nuclear disarmament.

We look forward to the holding of a successful fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, as a landmark event that is urgently needed to address the alarming stalemate in disarmament so that we can go back to the drawing board and revisit the current design of the machinery.

We continue to value the role of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. We also believe that the creation of better synergies and coordination among the First Committee, the CD, the UNDC and UNIDIR could contribute to a more efficient and effective functioning of the machinery. We once again welcome the Secretary-General's timely and valuable Agenda for Disarmament. We also encourage the active role of non-governmental organizations and civil society in support of the machinery.

Finally, the First Committee plays a central role in bridging the gaps and creating momentum and guidance for the disarmament machinery. It is our hope that all Member States will take a constructive and consensus approach to enable that task to succeed.

Mr. Al-Taie (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation associates itself with the statements by the representatives of Tunisia, on behalf of the Group of Arab States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations, and it has a record of previous successes. However, we all know about the stalemate that it has endured for nearly 20 years, owing to a lack of consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work that addresses the concerns of all Member States, in line with the rules of procedure of the Conference, and to an inability to make progress on the issues before it. In that regard, Iraq affirms how important it is that all Member States display the political will and flexibility needed to revitalize the work of the Conference and adopt a comprehensive programme of work, especially given the escalating tensions in international relations that we are seeing in various regional and international environments. That demands that we all recognize the

dangers surrounding the international community, particularly the increase in activities by terrorist groups that have access to weapons of all kinds, and therefore represent a major threat to international peace and security.

Iraq reaffirms the importance of keeping nuclear disarmament as a top priority for the Conference on Disarmament, in line with the special status granted to it by the Final Document of the 1978 first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), as well as the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which stresses that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is a violation of the provisions of international law on armed conflict. In that context, Iraq calls for new efforts with a view to concluding a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances and a treaty on banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

Iraq's delegation underscores the important role played by United Nations Disarmament Commission as the multilateral deliberative body concerned with disarmament affairs within the United Nations. We regret that the Commission could not hold its official meetings this year. The current complex security environment demands that we make every possible effort to enable the Commission to resume its deliberations next year and demonstrate the flexibility needed to break the current impasse in disarmament.

Mr. Tokarski (Poland): Poland associates itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union, and I would like to add a couple of thoughts in my national capacity.

This year, 2019, is an appropriate time to look back at the history of disarmament efforts in view of the fact that the League of Nations was established 100 years ago. Of course, we can quarrel about the extent to which the League was a successful project, but one thing is undeniable, which is that it laid the groundwork for the future United Nations and its disarmament arrangements. Shortly thereafter, evil ideologies and hegemonic policies overwhelmed peaceful diplomacy and the international order, but what lessons can we learn today from those times?

In the ever-changing international security environment, we have to make every effort to build on solid institutional structures and our sound international legal regime. We have at our disposal

a variety of instruments, including United Nations bodies, a wide range of disarmament, arms-control and non-proliferation regimes and international humanitarian law, complemented by the strong engagement of civil society. What we lack is a feeling of stability. We need to ensure that we make full use of the United Nations disarmament machinery and that all activities in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation are based on respect for legal commitments.

Poland believes in the ability of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) to fulfil its mandate. We hope that next year's session will pave the way for the commencement of negotiations on new international instruments. However, the Conference on Disarmament is not an independent international body that can negotiate treaties while remaining disconnected from the external world. It is an instrument in the hands of its members, and as such it depends on their political will and mutual trust. Similarly, just as we need to modernize the working methods of the CD, we believe we should do the same for the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Given our financial and time constraints, we can no longer accept three weeks of deliberations with no tangible results. Perhaps we need to be open to a discussion on shortening its proceedings and enhancing the participation of think tanks and civil society in order to explore innovative solutions to decades-old problems.

In conclusion, I would like to say a few words on the First Committee. Having roughly one month at our disposal, we should be able to seek more concrete solutions and create new ideas on disarmament. The structure of the work of the First Committee is clear, but what we are concerned about is the ongoing proliferation of new documents with little analysis of the relevance of the existing ones. We therefore support the idea of extending the cycle of the adoption of certain draft resolutions. A full version of this statement will be made available on PaperSmart.

Ms. Bhandari (India): India remains committed to the ideals enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and to the role of multilateralism in pursuit of those ideals. The United Nations has a central role and a primary responsibility in the area of disarmament.

The General Assembly's first special session on disarmament affirmed the role of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) as the world's sole multilateral

disarmament negotiating forum. The CD and its predecessor institutions have a number of credits on their record, including the negotiation of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. However, questions are being raised about the CD's effectiveness and efficacy, since for more than two decades now it has been unable to conduct negotiations in the discharge of its mandate. Attempts have been made to explore alternative forums. It is India's belief that the CD remains the most relevant and appropriate negotiating forum, as it brings together militarily significant States, including all States possessing nuclear weapons. It enjoys legitimacy through its mandate, membership and rules for negotiating legally binding universal instruments for strengthening international peace and security. What we therefore need is to revitalize the CD and bring it into the core of global disarmament efforts once again. In that regard, India has supported various efforts, including the establishment in 2017 of the Working Group on the Way Ahead and of the subsidiary bodies in 2018. We regret that the CD could not renew the mandate of the subsidiary bodies this year, losing the momentum built over the past two years.

India also attaches importance to the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) as a universal deliberative forum for building consensus on disarmament issues. We once again regret that the UNDC could not convene its formal session this year and hope that it will be able to do so next year and to make substantive recommendations on both issues on its agenda. It is also critical for the triad of the disarmament machinery to function as a composite tool so that ideas can flow seamlessly and so that progress made in one institution can be leveraged in the other.

In conclusion, there is an impression among some that our failure to address substantive disarmament and international security issues is due to procedural flaws and inherent inefficiency in the disarmament machinery. We must remind ourselves that a bad worker often blames his tools. In pursuit of our collective security, in an increasingly interdependent world, we have no alternative to strengthening the multilateral ideal and the institutions that it engenders.

Mr. Penaranda (Philippines): The Philippines associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Thailand, on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The Philippines concurs with the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, which states that serious reinvigoration is required at the level of international organizations and existing disarmament institutions. We regret that the key institutions of the disarmament machinery have been encountering serious difficulties, not only in the ability of Member States to produce outcome documents by consensus but also in the adoption of their programmes of work. This situation is very alarming, particularly in the case of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and now the First Committee. A possible reason for those difficulties is not so much the machinery itself but more importantly the widening divides among Member States themselves as they firmly adhere to entrenched positions. Unfortunately, the outstanding issues that prevent us from moving forward are in fact bilateral in nature or involve only a small number of delegations. As those issues intertwine with procedural issues, we end up deadlocked in our work.

That deadlock distracts us from the real work of reviewing our disarmament commitments and making sure that they are implemented with all seriousness and in a timely manner. It is of course important to improve coordination among the disarmament bodies and the integration of expertise into their work. There is also a need to continue building partnerships, as we advocate stronger collaboration among partner States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and research institutions in pursuing and expanding relevant initiatives. It is also necessary to sustain the work of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and ensure its independence and credibility.

An important aspect of our efforts to improve the disarmament machinery is the mainstreaming of gender issues in disarmament processes. My delegation therefore also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Canada on behalf of a cross-regional group of Member States. As a champion of women's rights and empowerment, the Philippines strongly supports the calls for an improved gender balance in the disarmament process within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and arms control and would like to see enhanced efforts in that regard.

A reinvigorated disarmament machinery requires a holistic approach that factors in the crucial role of

multilateralism and the strengthening of universal norms nurtured by meaningful dialogue and mutual trust.

Ms. Sánchez Rodríguez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): We align ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Cuba attaches great importance to the promotion of multilateralism as a basic principle of negotiations on disarmament and non-proliferation and as the only sustainable approach to addressing such issues. We reaffirm our support for the central role of the United Nations in that regard and of its disarmament machinery in particular. We share the deep concern about the erosion of the disarmament architecture and its serious consequences. We stress the importance of preserving existing disarmament and arms-control agreements that are the result of international cooperation and multilateral negotiations in response to the challenges facing humankind.

We regret the withdrawal of the United States from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, on the Iranian nuclear issue, and, more recently, from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. We oppose deliberate attempts to weaken or end multilateral discussions on disarmament. We are concerned about the establishment of growing numbers of expert groups of limited composition to examine extremely important issues. Cuba demands the strict and fair application of the principle of equitable geographical representation, including within the regions concerned themselves, in establishing the composition of any group of governmental experts in the area of disarmament and international security.

We reiterate the importance of ensuring that the Conference on Disarmament can agree without delay on a broad, comprehensive and balanced programme of work that will make it possible to break the deadlock affecting it and enable it to make progress with disarmament negotiations on various issues on its agenda in fulfilment of its mandate. The lack of political will on the part of some of its member States, particularly in the area of nuclear disarmament, is the cause of the stalemate in the Conference. We call for respect for its agreed methods of work and rules of procedure and urge rejection of any politicization of its work.

Let us take advantage of the momentum created by the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of

Nuclear Weapons to resume negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. That multilateral forum is prepared to negotiate several issues simultaneously, including treaties banning an arms race in outer space and providing effective security guarantees for States, like Cuba, that are not nuclear-weapon States. We encourage the Disarmament Commission to formulate recommendations on the two items on its agenda during this cycle, particularly in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Ms. Jáquez Huacuja (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico has always given its unqualified support to the multilateral forums established to achieve disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, to which Mexico attaches a high priority. However, we have to be honest and acknowledge that the disarmament machinery is in a critical state. Twenty-three years have passed since the Conference on Disarmament (CD) was last able to discharge its mandate. It has negotiated no multilateral instruments since 1996, and besides that has failed to agree on a programme of work with a negotiating mandate. Some delegations have even opposed the continuation of consultations on methods of work or similar areas. Mexico has not opposed the establishment of working groups and subsidiary bodies, although they are essentially contrary to the mandate of the Conference and overlap with the functions of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). However, it is not a good idea to perpetuate that distortion just so that the record can show that the CD kept busy and thereby to deny the paralysis.

In April of this year the Disarmament Commission was also unable to begin substantive work. Some delegations were spoke up with regard to preventing political issues outside the machinery from impeding its substantive work. Unfortunately, no meetings were held and the work was reduced to informal discussions. In addition to the situation this year, we should also remember that the UNDC has not been able to issue substantive recommendations, particularly in the area of nuclear disarmament, after deliberating for more than a decade.

We are now looking at a new episode in which the First Committee was unable to start its work in keeping with its timetable because of situations unrelated to the subject under discussion. The complex horizon of contemporary international security requires us as countries and as the United Nations to respond to the challenges facing the international community

in a global manner. The survival of humankind and our collective security depend on tangible actions in disarmament forums. That is why they were established.

Beyond political will, we must recognize that decision-making is fostered or, on the contrary, obstructed by inertia or inefficient rules of procedure. As we have said before, the rule of consensus, which is always desirable, must not be misinterpreted and applied through the veto. Consensus must be understood as a legitimate aspiration for cooperation and the success of multilateral work. It is therefore worth thinking once again about the fact that the multilateral disarmament machinery designed at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was conceived as a vehicle, not as an end in itself. The disarmament machinery was born of a particular historical and political context, but it must adapt to new realities and decide whether its components or processes require additional changes. The full version of my statement will be available on PaperSmart.

Mr. Dev Nath (Bangladesh): Bangladesh aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

Bangladesh reiterates its support for the work of the United Nations disarmament machinery, constituted primarily by its three mutually reinforcing forums, the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We also appreciate the contribution of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research to expanding the horizons of our knowledge and expertise on disarmament. We share the concern raised by others about the protracted impasse in the Conference on Disarmament owing to a lack of consensus on a programme of work for the past two decades. We hope that we will see more creative and forward-looking discussions on a possible solution to that long-standing problem in the days ahead. We urge the Secretary-General to keep the issue high on his agenda and to redouble his efforts to generate the political will needed for that purpose.

Regrettably, the Disarmament Commission, another key pillar of the multilateral disarmament machinery, has also failed to find a way to commence its substantive session this year. We appreciate the sincere efforts of the Chairs of the Commission to advance the discussion on nuclear weapons and outer space in an informal setting. Unfortunately, however,

that cannot compensate for the missed opportunity to build on the progress that the Commission achieved in 2018. We look forward to stepping up the pace of our work in the Commission in 2020 with the aim of closing the gaps in the fulfilment of its mandate during this cycle. We are nonetheless happy that we were able to avert the problematic situation that arose in the First Committee at the beginning of the session and to advance our efforts to achieve our shared goals and aspirations for a better, peaceful world for future generations. We subscribe to the notion of making the work of the First Committee more efficient and fit for purpose by reducing the duplication of efforts.

In conclusion, we believe that the United Nations disarmament machinery is still the best means for charting a way forward despite the enormous challenges, stalemates and painstakingly slow progress in its work. We must work together to reverse the trend of decades of paralysis in its most vital organs, including the CD. We reaffirm our support for convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament as soon as possible, which we believe would give Member States a new opportunity to demonstrate their collective will and capacity to infuse dynamism into the overall disarmament machinery with a view to achieving meaningful and far-reaching outcomes through a balanced combination of dialogue and diplomacy in a multilateral setting.

The Acting Chair: We have exhausted the time available for this meeting. I now give the floor to the Secretary for an announcement.

Ms. Elliott (Secretary of the Committee): The French delegation will be holding a side event tomorrow, 31 October, at 1.15 p.m. in Conference Room F, on the subject “Combating cross-border trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the Francophone context”.

The Acting Chair: The next meeting of the Committee will be held tomorrow morning at 10 a.m. sharp in this conference room, for a joint panel discussion of the First and Fourth Committees on possible challenges to space security and sustainability. In the afternoon we will hear a briefing by the President of the Conference on Disarmament, the Chairperson of the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, after which the Committee will continue with the list of speakers on the cluster “Disarmament machinery”.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.